

Trump ushers in political realignment



Author J.D. Vance foresees Trump and Sanders melding into the same party

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

WEST LAFAYETTE – On a cloudy May 3, 2016, as tens of thousands of Hoosiers went to the polls, a realignment occurred right before our eyes. When the dust settled on primary election night, Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders both won with 53 percent of the vote. It occurred despite the fact that Democratic leaders and super del-



egates unanimously backed Hillary Clinton and Gov. Mike Pence, and all but two members of the Republican National Convention delegation backed either Sen. Ted Cruz or Ohio Gov. John Kasich.

On Monday night at Purdue University, bestselling author J.D. Vance, whose book, "Hillbilly Elogy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis," was interviewed by President Mitch Daniels be-

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Great GOP fork in road

By **JOSHUA CLAYBOURN**

EVANSVILLE – We have reached a great fork in the road in the history of the Republican Party. The party's bombastic leader and president has a passionate grip on many voters, giving them control of all branches of government. The coattails of success extend beyond Washington and in Indiana helped keep Republican control of every office and body of state government as well as an overwhelming majority of the state's municipalities.



Faced with such success, many of our Republican friends decided to strike a deal with the devil and urge loyalty and unity with Trump. In their minds, a



“Rex Tillerson led his last organization in a lobbying campaign to undermine the national security interests of the United States in favor of Russia, Iran and corporation profit.”

- U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly, who voted against Tillerson



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little immaturity on Twitter is a fair price to pay to finally rein in Democratic policies and get things done. Besides, they say, Donald Trump the candidate or Donald Trump the showman is different from the sane man who will actually govern.

Nearly two weeks into the Trump presidency, we now know they are wrong. The unprecedented beginning for the administration included purposefully picked battles with the intelligence community, immigrants, and foreign allies; illegal executive orders; elevation of political advisers over military and foreign policy experts; gaslighting and lies; and a general chaotic and bumbling approach to executive organization. This presidency is everything we feared and it will only get much worse.

The focus now turns to our Republican friends who are the only ones with any real power to do something about it: What will you do as it inevitably gets worse and Trump pushes the boundary of what is right or constitutional? Where is your red line that cannot be crossed? Your answer to those questions will color not only your own legacy and the party's, but also the country's.

Conservatives will understandably cheer Trump's nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch, but it may cause some to momentarily overlook and forget Trump's dangerous and destructive approach to the law. Trump's entire career, as well as his campaign, show him to be someone who knows little and cares less about the U.S. Constitution as a constraint on what government can do; an open, repeated, boastful abuser of legal process against the weak and those who have crossed him; an explicit advocate of the use of regulation and prosecution for political score-settling; someone with open contempt for the ideals of

impartiality, the ethical use of legal process, and the rule of law as something that must restrain the powerful as well as the common. He did not flinch at the idea of giving unlawful orders to the military and expecting them to be obeyed. This was Donald Trump the candidate, and if we have learned anything during these first two weeks, it is that Donald Trump the president is the same man with the same approach. How much longer will Republicans allow it to continue? As conservative icon David Brooks wrote in the New York Times, "With most administrations you can agree



sometimes and disagree other times. But this one is a danger to the party and the nation in its existential nature. And so sooner or later all will have to choose what side they are on, and live forever after with the choice."

Sadly, the decision point for too many of our Republican friends will come only when public opinion polls or electoral results shift. Perhaps that will work to keep them in office, and perhaps their red line is simply the risk of electoral defeat. But that is cowardice, not leadership.

I believe some Hoosier Republicans have the courage to stand up on principles, decent behavior, and the rule of law. We see glimmers of hope from former Gov. Mitch Daniels, state representative David Ober, and LaPorte Mayor Blair Milo, who have each in their own way shown leadership and courage in standing up for what is right. We must fan those flames and encourage them.

As former Bush administration

official Eliot Cohen wrote in The Atlantic, "All can dedicate themselves to restoring the qualities upon which this republic, like all republics depends: On reverence for the truth; on a sober patriotism grounded in duty, moderation, respect for law, commitment to tradition, knowledge of our history, and open-mindedness."

We have reached a fork in the road. Now is the

time to determine which path you will take. History will judge you, and all of us, for the decisions Republican officials take in the coming months and years. We are praying it is the right one. ❖

Claybourn is a Republican attorney in Evansville.

Trump and numbers

By **TONY SAMUEL**

INDIANAPOLIS – With my day job, I just had coffee with an up-and-coming Republican star who was not initially a Trump supporter. While not thrilled with



everything our president has done over the first two weeks, he was happy with 85% of what has been accomplished. He was extremely pleased with the selection of Judge Neil Gorsuch as the Supreme Court nominee, as are so many others.

As the 85% statement sank in after our meeting, it struck me that this is going to be a numbers game. If someone who was probably one of the last Republicans to come around to accept Trump is at 85% now and says that he could be a great president if he changes a few things here and there, then I think the numbers will continue to look good for our president.

Other numbers to look at are the thousands of protestors and numbers of protests in parts of the country and what they represent. Will these numbers grow or will they burn out soon enough because of the lack of solutions offered and the unwillingness to engage in a grown-up dialogue?

In two years, will the Republican Party do what is needed to keep the high numbers of Trump supporters engaged to help ward off the usual backlash after a presidential election? Or will the numbers of protests scare off the GOP establishment to the point that they distance themselves from the president, possibly losing these newfound voters?

When we were out on the campaign trail, everywhere Rex Early and I went, half of the crowd was traditional GOPers. The other half was Trump supporters who would tell us they had not participated in the political process for decades, if ever. These were great Americans that just didn't trust Washington. They told us that they were waiting for someone like Trump – someone who would shake things up and really get things done.

I believe that the most important numbers to these folks and most Americans will be the number of issues being addressed at such a dizzying pace. This pace

may be too fast for Washington, but Americans can relate to it because of our daily lives. How many of us never have enough time in a day between work and kids' activities and the unexpected daily twists and turns? But we keep at it until it all gets done. The more Washington tries to slow him down, the greater support for him will grow.

The sheer number of problems being solved will overshadow any missteps. Trump is a man of action. He proved it with the Carrier announcement and other jobs announcements even before being sworn into office and he hit the ground running on Jan. 20 like nothing we've ever seen.

This is what America will respond to and this is what will make the numbers come out in his favor. Whether it's bringing back jobs by cutting taxes and rolling back burdensome, job-stifling regulations, challenging pharmaceutical companies on high drug prices, taking the appropriate steps to repeal and replace Obamacare, making the best choice for the Supreme Court, and yes even doing what he feels is necessary to keep Americans safe, President Trump has already proven that he is a man of his word and that he won't rest at all while there is work to be done.

Speaking of keeping us safe, while it's easy to criticize the rollout of the moratorium on immigration from the seven countries plagued by terrorist recruitment and training and easy to misinterpret the rationale behind it, let's not forget that we are at war with Islamic radical terrorism and this president is taking action to prevent an attack rather than let one happen, only to condemn it later. I for one am tired of the inaction that leads to more attacks. If one life was saved by these actions or will be saved by future actions, then it's worth it. What President Trump did was the first part of just one piece of a comprehensive plan to win this war and over the next several months we will see the complete plan in place and a change in direction of this war.

These and so many other actions and accomplishments are what will overshadow the constant critiques and fake tears.

Trump is president, and he's doing stuff. Shaking things up and getting things done will, in the end, result in winning the numbers game. ❖

Samuel was vice chairman of the Indiana Donald Trump presidential campaign.

Realignment, from page 1

fore a packed Loeb Theater assembly. Daniels noted the Vance's book "opened up a world to the elites they didn't know existed," and called the author's family migration from the hollers of Jackson, Ky., to Middletown, Ohio, "a giant revelation." The upper crust of American culture and the news media had reacted to the Trump nomination, as New York Times columnist Frank Bruni observed, with an air of "smugness and sanctimony."

Trump's stunning upset victory on Nov. 8 was an epic thunderclap, a microburst so compelling that it has scattered the American political lawn furniture well up into the treeline.

While his book never included the name "Donald Trump," Vance picked up the cue. "How else would they know?" Vance said.

He explained that his fame over the past year had positioned him as the "Trump whisperer" as scores of union workers, so-called Reagan Democrats and blue collar Republicans not only flooded GOP precincts throughout Indiana, the upper Midwest and the valleys of Pennsylvania down the southern range, but fueled one of the greatest presidential upsets in American history. Vance would observe that many of "those who voted for Trump would lose their Obamacare coverage."

Vance and the hardscrabble grandmother who raised him after his father disappeared and his mother grappled with a lifetime of addiction lived both a reality and a mirage. "Life is unfair for people like us," he said, but added that his Mamaw Blanton would insist, "Don't let them say the deck is stacked against you."

Bridges and divides

Questioned about the "bridges and divides" he faced as he coursed his way from the Kentucky hollers to Middletown, then the U.S. Marine Corps, Ohio State University, Yale and finally Silicon Valley, Vance said he wanted his kin and community to read his book "and feel we're not as good as we thought we were." He came to realize that the plight of "urban black poor was not so different than the white poor."

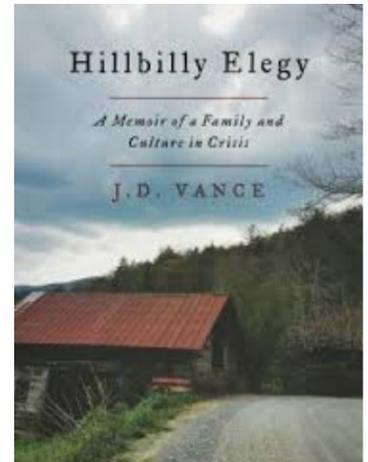
Daniels concluded the public event by observing that America faces two problems: An "increasing social

distance" between economic demographics and the concept of "upward mobility" that is the heart of our evolution in the face of a global economy and the encroachment of artificial intelligence that must either be "maintained or recovered."

The Hoosier folk who voted early in camouflage and flooded Republican precincts from the Elkhart RV patch to the four Howard County voting centers in the shadows of the Chrysler/Fiat complex, to our own hollers of Oldenburg, Gnaw Bone and Sulphur Springs felt such a stirring in their civic souls, some for the first time in a generation, if ever. The Indiana Trump brain trust of Rex Early and Tony Samuel witnessed dozens of denizens who had never turned out before, filling Golden Corral dining rooms, and mowing Trump's name into the Hoosier version of Kentucky bluegrass, viewing the Manhattan mogul



Author J.D. Vance with Purdue President Mitch Daniels at Westwood on Monday. Vance wrote the best-selling book, "Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis."



as either an economic savior or a raging bull preparing to smash Capitol Hill marble and stuffy Senate decorum.

After Daniels hosted a dinner honoring Vance at Westwood, the Purdue president's residence, additional questions were raised. Daniels political operative Mark Lubbers and this writer pressed Vance on the populist uprising "unfolding before our eyes" and how to interpret not only the jarring upset of Nov. 8, 2016, but the intriguing to disturbing first days of the Trump presidency.

Lubbers noted the "common social markers" of the Scots-Irish of Appalachia and the inner city black culture that emerged mid-20th Century, presenting parallel policy challenges and a range of addictions spanning from crack cocaine, to methamphetamine, and now heroin, a terrorizing staple in both realms. This writer pressed him on how to gauge the Trumpian upheaval that has gripped the capitol and filled airports and public squares with protesters this past week. "I don't think anyone in this room can say where we're going to end up in the next three or four years," I observed.

Vance described an on-going conversation with Michael Lind, co-founder of the New America Foundation,

and a contributor to Politico. "He argued something that earned a lot of scorn and a lot of derision, but he said basically what we're witnessing is a political realignment, which we haven't seen since the 1930s," Vance explained. "Unless you appreciate how truly transformational this is, you're going to miss all the implications of the trend."

Vance then offered this jaw-dropper: "In 20 years, Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders will be in the same party. And in 20 years, Hillary Clinton and Paul Ryan will be in the same party. I think that is very, very interesting and that shift will be a big part of where we go over the next 20 or 30 years."

During the Indiana presidential primary, Hoosiers witnessed both Trump and Sanders insisting that the economic and political systems were "rigged." Both used the Carrier and United Technology job flight to Mexico as evidence. But on the ideological spectrum, they were approaching the vortex seemingly 180 degrees apart.

HPI observed in May when coming face to face with Trump at Shapiro's where he ordered a reuben sandwich, "Like Bobby Knight, Trump has an imposing, bigger-than-life presence, and moves like a shark. He has proven to find weaknesses of his opponents, tag them with monikers that play to his audiences, and poke his rivals with extreme effectiveness. He feeds off the same middle class angst that is fueling, 180 degrees away, the Bernie Sanders campaign. These are two political movements running in tandem. Trump has created a narrative, finding a voice that reaches the middle class, Reagan Democrats-turned-Republicans, and other folks who are consumed in sets of grievances. His rallies are streams of consciousness that reach the hearts of Hoosiers believing they are being left behind in a society."

As for Sanders, HPI observed, "I watched Bernie Sanders indict the current economic and political status quo in front of about 10,000 people on Monument Circle on primary election eve. His campaign has raised more



Rust Belt and Appalachian scenes from Pennsylvania and Middletown, Ohio.

than \$100 million in small donations, is not beholden to super PACs and special interests, and is promising a 'revolution' that the broader public appears to be embracing. The \$7 billion in profits by United Technologies, and its move to Mexico to save \$65 million while abandoning a city it called home for six decades, has become the poster for middle class angst. Sanders conjures notions of \$100 million golden parachutes for departing executives, and an extreme bent for shareholder profits over any scraps for the middle and lower classes that resonates in a different prism than the one Trump presents."

Transitioning political tectonics

In January 2014, Lind wrote, "American politics looks to be on the verge of a grand transition from one political era to another; the declining coherency of the politics espoused by both Reaganite Conservatives and Clintonite New Democrats has opened the way for more assertive social democratic progressives and a more libertarian, anti-statist right. The left-right divide in the years and decades ahead may be defined more by economic

differences between increasingly assertive social democratic progressives and a more-libertarian, anti-statist right. Like Richard Nixon, whose election marked a transition between the New Deal era of Franklin Roosevelt and Dwight Eisenhower and the conservative era of Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton, Barack Obama may prove to be a transitional figure, marking the divide between one era in American politics and the next."

In July 2015, Lind warned of a coming realignment. "Economic inequality has only grown dramatically after three decades of warmed-over Reaganism, fueling the resurrection of the sort of liberal populism that Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren have harnessed, and which Clinton is plainly taking on board to a degree," Lind wrote. "Another reason for the surge of the left is that progres-

sives have won the culture war. Support for gay rights and gay marriage among a national majority, including most young Republicans, is only the most dramatic example of the national trend toward greater social liberalism.”

Lind added, “Just as Jimmy Carter was a transitional figure between New Deal liberalism and New Democrat neoliberalism, so Barack Obama may prove to have been a transitional figure between neoliberalism and a more self-confident progressivism.”

And last July 4, Lind observed, “The very fundamentals of American identity appear to be up for debate this year. And in many ways, they are. The problem, though, is this: Neither side is spelling out a vision for being an American that actually works for all Americans. On July 4, it’s time to consider an inclusive idea of the American nation – a melting pot vision of American identity that reconciles America’s founding ideals with its racial and ethnic diversity. This is a problem that America has always grappled with.”

Lind continued, “The claim that the Founders sought to create a multiracial democracy that welcomed immigrants from all over the world might make inspiring Fourth of July oratory, but it isn’t true. The first U.S. naturalization act of 1790 limited citizenship to immigrants who were ‘free white persons,’ excluding Africans, Asians and others. America’s white only-naturalization policy lasted until after World War II.”

Slaughtering Republican sacred cows

Vanced explained, “If you think about what Trump really ran on, he made the centerpiece of his campaign, he slaughtered a lot of Republican sacred cows. You go to his website and talk about his tax plan, it was a tax plan that wasn’t much different than the one Mitt Romney ran on in ‘12. What did he talk about: Raising taxes on hedge funds on billionaires, he talked about closing the carried interest loophole. He talked about immigration and primarily talked about it through the lens of wages and wage competition, another Republican sacred cow to be sacrificed.

“He was very critical of the foreign policy that exists on the right and the left, especially on the right,” Vance said of Trump. “He framed the whole host of issues a pretty radical departure from George W. Bush in 2004 and very few people seemed to really appreciate that fact.

Michael’s point is that if you look at the demographics, the Republican Party if you liked it or not, has inherited the FDR coalition of the 1930s, minus black voters. There’s a question whether that coalition is stable, or whether the Democratic Party coalition is stable because it is increasingly composed of culturally elite upper crust people on the one hand, that’s the Democratic coalition, and that used to be the province of the Republican Party. That’s one core part of the Democratic base now.

“More money from Wall Street went to Hillary Clinton than Donald Trump for the first time since the post-World War II era,” Vance stated.

“The second part of the Democratic Party coalition is minority voters. So Michael’s argument is eventually minority voters will come along. The white middle class will have to make concessions, minority voters will have to make concessions, maybe less than the Democratic coalition, but we will have a reformulation of the FDR coalition of the 1930s, but it will call itself Republican. And consequently the policies that will come will be much more populist than current Republican Party politics. They already are compared to 2012.”



J.D. Vance listens to a question at the Purdue presidential residence of Westwood on Monday night. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

Epilogue

In the first two weeks of the Trump presidency, Americans are witnessing on a daily basis the political temblors indicative of the political tectonic plates shifting. Some are seeing an emerging authoritarianism that corresponds with Republican National Committeeman John Hammond III’s observation more than a year ago that some Americans were seeking a “strongman” president.

Others view the initial Trump orders rolling back EPA edicts and crimping access to American shores via the prism of religious tests as the embodiment of campaign promises evolving into reality.

As we learned during the New Deal, political realignments are not tidy affairs, the change moving like a Kentucky Kingdom rollercoaster. As we learned when the Great Society forged Richard Nixon’s New South, some of the most compelling dramas occur on southern bridges, in jail cells, sweltering hotel kitchens and a balcony in Memphis.

Today we face the same type of challenges, the final chapters of this emerging era unfathomable at this writing. ❖

SCOTUS confronts Donnelly; Brooks out, Hurt in, Ballard might

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – The 2018 challenge to U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly began taking shape on Tuesday as U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks said she wouldn't run, and Kokomo attorney Mark Hurt said he will. The two Republican decisions came on the same day that President Trump named Judge

Neil Gorsuch as his U.S. Supreme Court nominee, and the coming Senate showdown will thrust Donnelly into one of the first big battles of the Trump era.

As the South Bend Tribune reported on Wednesday,

"The conservative Judicial Crisis Network already has announced a \$10 million ad campaign for Trump's nominee, focusing on senators in states that Trump won, including Indiana. Other conservative groups are expected to join the fray. Democrats, meanwhile, still are upset over Republicans' decision last year not to consider President Obama's nominee for the high court, Merrick Garland, and many are considering organizing a filibuster of Trump's pick. They will want Donnelly on their side."

Donnelly vowed to weigh the merits of the nomination. "As I have said part of our job as senators includes considering, debating, and voting on judicial nominations, including to the Supreme Court," Donnelly said in a Wednesday statement. "I will carefully review and consider the record and qualifications of Neil Gorsuch."

Donnelly has faced arduous policy votes that had vast political ramifications. He voted for the Affordable Care Act in March 2010, then defended his 2nd CD seat against then-State Rep. Jackie Walorski. Two years

later, he won his U.S. Senate seat despite a full-on assault by the Republican nominee Richard Mourdock, who used Obamacare as one of his key issues.

Inside Elections already rates the Indiana Senate race as a "tossup," and other national prognosticators view it as an endangered Democratic seat.

The Gorsuch battle, which could include a Senate filibuster attempt by Democrats, will likely fade in scope by the time the 2018 race shifts into gear. But Donnelly's decision on whether to fall in line with Democrats or, as he has done several times in the past, side with his constituents over party priorities, will almost certainly have echoes two years hence.

By most accounts, Judge Gorsuch is a credible nominee, though a conservative jurist possessing many of the constitutional constructionist sentiments and writing skills that Justice Scalia did until his death in February 2016. But Democrats are still angered that before rigor mortis set in, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell vowed to keep the seat open, hoping for a Republican president.

As for the 2018 Senate race, Brooks, R-Carmel,



U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly addresses protesters at Indianapolis International Airport after President Trump signed the immigration ban order.

said in a statement, "Our country has many opportunities and challenges ahead, and I love and am focused on being a strong leader for the 5th District in Congress."

Her decision not to run, as HPI noted in its analysis in the Jan. 26 edition, isn't surprising. She went through a bruising 12-day gubernatorial race last July, defeated in the 22-person caucus by Gov. Eric Holcomb. But

her congressional career, most believe, has a high arc. There is also speculation that she possesses a potential cabinet pedigree.

Brooks' decision leaves U.S. Reps. Luke Messer and Todd Rokita, House Speaker Brian Bosma and former Indianapolis mayor Greg Ballard pondering a run. Ballard told HPI that he is "definitely considering" a bid. Messer allies are signaling he will formally enter the race in May. Rokita supporters have posted a "draft" Facebook page, presumably with the congressman's imprimatur. State Sen. Mike Delph, R-Carmel, has told HPI he will make a decision, likely after the General Assembly session ends in April, adding that he will not be deterred by other potential candidates.

The dark horse in the GOP equation is Mark Hurt, a former aide to U.S. Sen. Dan Coats and Michigan Gov. John Engler, who launched his candidacy at Shapiro's Deli in Indianapolis on Wednesday, followed by stops in Fort Wayne today and Evansville on Friday.

"I'm a compassionate conservative," said Hurt, whose brother-in-law is former congressman Mark Souder. "I would say a common sense conservative. I've been running my own businesses. Being out in the real world for



Republican John Hurt kicked off his U.S. Senate campaign this week week.

about 18 years helped me pick up the realism. I'm really trying to deal with the issues."

Hurt said he will base his Senate campaign on opposing the Iranian nuclear deal, supporting Israel, and adding border security with Mexico. While he said he supports President Donald Trump, Hurt said building the wall is not the only solution, saying he advocates sensor technology Israel uses, as well as adding border security agents on both sides of the border. "There are meandering rivers, and lot of tunnels under the current wall," he said. "We need more border patrol agents and better technology on both sides."

Asked how he could win a Republican primary that could include Messer, Rokita, Delph and potentially others, Hurt said, "I think if you look at me, I'm the long shot. Part of that will be who runs. There could be five or 10 people. You adapt your strategy on who you're competing."

Hurt said he's already spoken to 30 Rotary clubs and will attend Lincoln Day dinners, Young Republican and women's events. "It will be a grassroots campaign," he said. "Trump is a good model in that he mounted a populist campaign." ❖

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Hupfer takes helm at GOP highwater mark

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer was elected to that position on Wednesday unanimously. He takes the helm of the party at one of its historic high water marks, dominating the Statehouse, the congressional delegation, as well as at the county level.

He also may be one of the first sitting Republican Central Committee members to ascend to the chair. Hupfer was unopposed to replace Chairman Jeff Cardwell, with Gov. Eric Holcomb nominating his old friend and ally. Cardwell is expecting to become ambassador to El Salvador.

"I want to be inclusive as possible and set that tone," Hupfer said Wednesday afternoon at a north side Starbucks. "We have a really involved transition process. We had over 50 folks helping us with transition. We are benchmarking with other states and the national parties. We've got the involvement of every statewide leadership official and every Member of our congressional delegation."

Many incoming chairs take the helm after defeat. Hupfer finds the party coming off a 19% win by President Donald Trump while the state extended its gubernatorial dominance to 16 years with the election of his long-time friend, Gov. Eric Holcomb. Hupfer co-chaired Holcomb's transition committee and served as his campaign treasurer.

"It's easy to lose and do a post-mortem. When you win, you take a step back," he said. "We don't want to rest on our laurels. We want to continue to be the party of purpose. We have the best office support. As we're hearing from folks, we want to improve communications from the party outward. Data plays a bigger role and we want to be accumulating and disseminating that data. We want to get to the cutting edge of data, the quality of it and our ability to use it. Since Mitch Daniels was governor, we've put metrics in place and we will measure ourselves constantly."

Immediately on the radar is the 2018 mid-term election where the GOP will try and unseat U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly. "It's a long way off," Hupfer said. "We need to spend 2017 to strengthen our base. From the top of the ticket, from Sen. Donnelly on down, we'll have to sell our message." He said that he is prepared to arm the emerg-

ing Republican field with data sets. "We are preparing to show how Sen. Donnelly is voting, and how it doesn't match with Hoosiers' expectations."

As Hupfer spoke, incoming strategist and communications director Pete Seat relayed breaking news: Sen. Donnelly had voted against secretary of state nominee Rex Tillerson.

Hupfer also said that the party will identify and reach out to the swarm of new Trump voters which propelled the party to its current lofty position. Trump will likely make the mid-terms a challenge, as with any first term president. "We've got a little bit of our own history to view this through," said Hupfer. "Gov. Daniels said in one of his early speeches that while 'all politicians are the same', people were going to see something different from a Daniels administration. President Trump is going to approach this in a different manner. He's beginning to do what he told the American people he was going to do. They expect change."

As for Gov. Holcomb, Hupfer will be charged to run the state party and set the stage for his reelection campaign in 2020. "He and I have had a personal relationship and friendship well before Mitch Daniels came. We were two of the first people on the road with Mitch. We were doing our roles even before he was candidate, in the days of the Phoenix Project, doing the early Lincoln Days when he was at OMB."

That was in reference to the Phoenix Project staged by Jim Kittle, Bob Grand and Randy Tobias, who successfully sought to wrest control of the Republican Party in 2002 and 2003, setting the stage for Daniels to come back and run in 2004.

Hupfer announces staff changes

Hupfer announced the three individuals who will comprise the Party's senior staff team for the 2018 election cycle. Matt Huckleby, Pete Seat and Mindy Colbert most recently worked on the historic 100-day gubernatorial campaign of Gov. Holcomb and each bring a unique skill set to their new roles.

"Matt, Pete and Mindy are a political trifecta," Hupfer said. "Between them, they have unparalleled experience in every facet of a campaign and together they will be a true asset to candidates, elected officials and Republicans statewide as we prepare to both maintain our hold of statewide offices, and most importantly, defeat Joe Donnelly in 2018."

Holcomb for Indiana campaign manager Mike O'Brien added, "Matt, Pete and Mindy were senior mem-



bers of a team that did what no other group has done in the history of our state win a gubernatorial campaign in just 100 days. Their combined skills and knowledge, from the grassroots levels of cities and towns across Indiana to The White House, will be invaluable to Chairman Hupfer and our entire Republican team."

Huckleby, a Harrison County native, will be the party's executive director of political strategy and operations. In this role, he will manage the party's field operations, data analytics and internal operations. Huckelby most recently was political director for the Holcomb campaign. He previously was political director for Mike Pence for Indiana and district director and campaign manager for U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon.

Seat, a Lake County native, will be the party's executive director of strategic communications and talent development. In this role, he will oversee messaging and media relations for the party, including serving as chief spokesman, and take the lead in identifying and training



Matt Huckelby, Mindy Colbert and Pete Seat are staffing the Indiana Republican Party.

a strong bench of future campaign staff and candidates. Seat most recently was communications director for Eric Holcomb for Indiana. He previously was senior project manager at Hathaway Strategies and communications director of the Indiana Republican Party under then-Chairman Holcomb. He also

served in the George W. Bush White House.

Colbert, a Tipton County native, will be the party's director of fundraising operations in addition to assuming the role of finance director for Eric Holcomb for Indiana. For both entities she will coordinate fundraising operations and manage donor relations. Most recently, she was deputy finance director for the governor's campaign while running her own political finance consulting firm, Colbert Consulting, LLC. She previously was the party's finance director and also raised funds for the Indiana Chamber of Commerce. ❖

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Investing in civics education

By **CHRISTINA HALE**

INDIANAPOLIS – There has been a great deal of controversy and legislation to address voter fraud here in Indiana and now nationally in the recent and very recent past. In fact, since 2005, Indiana has had one of the most stringent voter ID laws in the country.

Long before the issue of fraud was raised in the recent national election, here in Indiana we've attempted to legislate even more prescriptive law, even though as U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, writing for the Supreme Court's majority that held up the law's constitutionality in *Crawford v. Marion County Election Board*, said that "the record contains no evidence of any such fraud actually occurring in Indiana at any time in its history."



OK. We all get that the American political landscape since then has changed significantly, and we struggle to understand how and why. Certainly there are a number of contributing factors. Compounding our obsession with phantom fraud is the anemic voter turnout for which Indiana has become infamous. Notably, we had the worst turnout in the nation in 2014.

Rather than spending time on problems we don't have, perhaps it is time to help people engage in the civic process and make better informed decisions at the polling place. Rather than worry about phantom voter fraud, perhaps we should be addressing the the issue of relative civic ignorance here in Indiana (as well as nationally).

You won't find these topics we used to call social studies on the ISTEP, but there is currently a commendable move in the legislature to beef up requirements for our high school students to gain a better mastery of government, American and Indiana history. This is both timely and important.

Clearly, it has been demonstrated time and again that a high percentage of the voting-age population is ignorant of very basic facts we expect them to know. Most of us accept that knowledge of civics that is necessary to make rational choices as we cast our ballots, but evidence suggests that we fall short of the mark.

In 2010, *The Atlantic* magazine reported some shocking findings:

- Americans were more able to identify Michael Jackson as the composer of a number of songs than to know that the Bill of Rights was the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

- When asked in what century the American Revolution took place and whether the Civil War, the War of 1812, and the Emancipation Proclamation preceded or followed the Revolution, more than 30 percent of respondents answered that question incorrectly.

- More than a third of Americans did not know that the Bill of Rights guarantees a right to a trial by jury. The *Atlantic* also reported more recently that in a study of historical knowledge carried out in 2015 for the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), more than 80 percent of college seniors at 55 top-ranked institutions would have received a grade of either a D or F.

- Only about 20 percent knew that James Madison was the father of the Constitution, while over 60 percent gave the title to Thomas Jefferson.

- More than 40 percent of college graduates did not know that the Constitution grants the power to declare war to Congress.

- Roughly half of college students could not correctly state the length of the terms of members of the Senate or the House of Representatives.

Several years ago I attended a Tea Party meeting. I had been invited by a constituent, and appreciated the opportunity talk with people I wouldn't usually have a chance to meet.

Sitting at a round table, listening to the speaker, a pretty woman shook her head so sadly. She whispered to me about how depressed the meeting made her feel. She was depressed and angry. I walked out of there impressed.

The conversations there were a bit dire and angry for certain, but the people there knew their stuff. A young man even handed me a pocket copy of the Indiana Constitution. My hope is that people in all political parties value knowledge of government and our governing documents so well.

We have a golden opportunity now to support this effort in the General Assembly to amp up our approach to civics education for the Indiana students of today to become better informed voters of tomorrow. Let's run with it. ❖

Hale is the 2016 Democratic lieutenant governor nominee and a former member of the Indiana House of Representatives.

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Hill opposes Holcomb on needle exchange

By **THOMAS CURRY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Early into the 2017 session, Gov. Eric Holcomb and the Republican-controlled Statehouse have shared the same priorities and ideas to solve Indiana's most pressing issues. One has been a focused effort on fighting Indiana's drug crisis. Last week, however, new Attorney General Curtis Hill openly opposed the governor's viewpoint on needle exchange programs and their effectiveness in tackling the heroin crisis.



Hill, Indiana's top vote-getter last November, came out against needle exchange programs during testimony to the Public House Committee, cautioning that some programs are ineffective and are giving away more needles than they are receiving. "The current needle exchange program may be well intended, but it has evolved into a needle give-away, ultimately contributing to more syringes being passed around and shared in our communities. It will only serve to further trap them in the vicious cycle of opioid addiction."

Needle exchange has seen support in both the House and Senate as well as from members on both sides of the aisle. The current stance on needle exchange is a swift departure from former Gov. Mike Pence, and there was vocal support against the idea. At this time in Indiana politics, however, many members sing a different tune on the issue. Senate President David Long said early in January that he supports needle exchange and that he "has come around to it and understands it better now."

In the House, HB1438 calls for expanding the ability of local communities to create needle exchanges. The issue has been backed by both Republicans and Democrats. House speaker Brian Bosma told members of the media that he supports what the state is doing now and wants to give "more flexibility" to local communities in establishing needle exchange programs.

Minority leader Scott Pelath called Hill's testimony before the committee "a bad audition" for the new AG. Pelath has praised Gov. Holcomb for his stance on needle exchange and said it's a "welcomed difference from his predecessor."

Last week, members of the Legislative Black Caucus also signaled disapproval of Hill's testimony. State Rep. Charlie Brown called it "disappointing" and said that he hopes "we can change his mind on the issue." Members of

the caucus said that needle exchange rates are as high as 97% and have proven effective.

Gov. Holcomb's press secretary, Stephanie Wilson, reacted to Hill's criticism. "The governor is clear about his position on giving local communities the authority to establish and implement needle exchange programs. Locals are best positioned to make these determinations," Wilson said. "The people making the decisions should be the ones closest to the problem."

Asked if the governor is concerned about Hill's comments making needle exchange harder to get done this session, Wilson responded that the governor believes "addiction is a chronic disease, not a moral failure. This epidemic touches the lives of Hoosiers from every segment of society and in every part of the state. We'll continue to work with community partners, state leaders and lawmakers to ensure Indiana advances key legislation that attacks this epidemic."

AG Hill told HPI, "There is no rift between myself and Gov. Holcomb. We both continue to work in the best interest for all Hoosiers."

Hill said that he hopes to continue working with Holcomb on fighting Indiana's drug epidemic. "We remain hopeful that our continued collaborative efforts with the Indiana General Assembly and the governor's office will lead to a comprehensive solution that will effectively address heroin abuse and, on a broader level, opioid addiction in our state."

His continued hesitation is despite some claims of 97% exchange rate at these programs, Hill citing data from an article in the Richmond Palladium-Item. "In this article, it was reported that 580 used needles were turned in and 800 new needles were handed out earlier this month," Hill said. "In just the last two months, there was a net increase of 366 more needles in Wayne County because of the needle exchange program."



Attorney General Curtis Hill during the Republican Convention. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

Bosma defends Smaltz

House Speaker Brian Bosma strongly defended a Republican colleague Tuesday after an anti-abortion group picketed the legislator's home in Auburn for several hours Sunday and also attempted to demonstrate at his church (Kelly, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). The protest against Rep. Ben Smaltz came after his decision not to hear a bill banning abortion in Indiana. "I think some of the tactics of the proponents are not appropriate," Bosma said. "It's not appropriate to show up at someone's house of worship and call their faith into question. It's not effective." Bosma said Smaltz is a strong pro-life conservative and he made the right decision not to hear a bill that would lead to a sure lawsuit with little chance of success. "Passing something that is going to be unsuccessful just to make a point I don't think is advisable," the speaker said.

Study on Terre Haute casino

A state analysis estimates 800,000 people would visit a proposed Terre Haute casino each year, generating between \$75 million and \$88 million in adjusted gaming revenue (Taylor, Terre Haute Tribune-Star). The review by the Indiana Legislative Services Agency says about 43 percent of that revenue would come from other gaming locations. State Sen. Jon Ford moved Wednesday to make his Terre Haute casino bill more palatable to some existing gaming interests (Taylor, Terre Haute Tribune-Star). Ford introduced and the Senate Public Policy Committee approved, an amendment requiring the owner of a proposed casino to pay local governments in Madison and Shelby counties more than \$500,000 per year and \$900,000 annually to the Indiana Horse Racing Commission.

Senate passes water infrastructure bill

The days of Hoosiers simply taking water availability for granted may be over (Carden, NWI Times). On Monday, the Indiana Senate voted 49-0 for legislation, sponsored by state Sen. Ed Charbonneau, R-Valparaiso, that begins the process of determining the state's current water capacity and future need, as well as how to rebuild its broken water infrastructure. Senate Bill 511, which now goes to the House, puts the Indiana Finance Authority in charge of various water studies and requires state agen-

cies evaluating water rate hike proposals to consider long-term infrastructure replacement and regulatory costs. In addition, it aims to prevent a water crisis like that in Flint, Michigan, from happening in Indiana by authorizing water quality tests before the water source of a public utility is changed.

Lawmakers weigh gaming tax change

Lawmakers are weighing a bill that would make expansive changes to Indiana's gaming taxes (Smith, Indiana Public Media). Republican Representative Todd Huston says his legislation aims to help Indiana casinos stay viable as they face increasing competition. Changes it would make to current law include eliminating the admissions tax - a three dollar fee each time a person enters the gaming floor. Huston says this discourages casinos from adding attractions like restaurants and bars. Huston's bill would instead charge a three percent tax on casinos' gaming revenue. Republican Representative Randy Frye says, while the bill's changes might not make a big impact on state revenues, the impact on small communities with casinos in his district would be enormous. "We aren't just thinking about the impact here, financially to the state of Indiana. We're thinking about the impact financially to those small communities, some of which have bonds against their riverboat money." Legislative fiscal analysts

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estimate a yearly revenue hit of around 50 million dollars for local communities. Huston stresses that the bill is far from a final product.

Soliday pledges to rework Tesla bill

Indiana lawmakers are reworking a bill after critics charged that it would sound the death knell for auto manufacturer Tesla's ability to sell cars in the state (Associated Press). After nearly two hours of testimony Wednesday, House transportation committee Chairman Ed Soliday called a recess and said he would hammer out a compromise between conventional auto manufacturers, their dealership franchises and Tesla. The Valparaiso Republican said the committee would reconvene Thursday for a vote on an amendment. "We are a very pro-business state, but at the same time, (we need to) maintain loyalty to those people who have provided jobs, invested billions of dollars in our state and have serviced the consumers of Indiana for many, many years," said Soliday.

ATV safety bill passes committee

The House Committee on Roads and Transportation approved a proposal authored by State Reps. Ron Bacon (R-Chandler) and Wendy McNamara (R-Evansville) that works to increase ATV safety, a news release stated (Howey Politics Indiana). If passed into law, House Bill 1200 would require anyone under the age of 18 to wear a helmet while riding or operating off-road vehicles, like ATVs. "

Lawson throws support to notaries bill

The Indiana State Senate passed Senate Bill 539 regarding Notaries Public out of committee, with Secretary of State Connie Lawson supporting the amended bill, her office stated in a news release. Lawson remains optimistic about the future of introducing new technologies of remote notarization to the process. Below is her statement on the issue. "As Secretary of State, I am strongly supportive of legislation to authorize Indiana notaries to conduct notarizations by means of a secure, recorded two-way live audio-video call.

Wrongful conviction bill advances

A bill that would provide monetary compensation to wrongly convicted Hoosiers is advancing (Stancombe, Statehouse File). Under House Bill 1062, individuals sentenced for a crime they did not commit could apply to receive a \$25,000 compensation for every year they spent in the Department of Corrections. However, the money would be available only if the person is vacated by DNA evidence. "I've got to stick with DNA," said author Rep. Greg Steuerwald, R-Avon. "It's the most scientific basis I can think of in determining the innocent." But Rep. Ryan Dvorak, D-South Bend, though in favor of the general idea, said he thinks limiting it to DNA evidence is too restrictive. "In fact most sentences that are vacated don't have anything to do with DNA," he said. Dvorak also said that on the opposite

end, he would like to see the bill's language tightened up in terms of the difference between vacated and exonerated.

Bill would vacate victim convictions

Victims of human trafficking in Indiana could soon have a new mechanism for relief from charges brought against them while they were under the control of a trafficker if a new bill designed to vacate those charges is passed (Covington, Indiana Lawyer). Although members of the Senate Corrections and Criminal Law Committee did not vote on Senate Bill 166 when its author, Sen. Jack Sandlin, R-Indianapolis, presented it on Tuesday, lawmakers indicated that they were supportive of the concept. If passed, SB 166 would allow individuals convicted of non-violent offenses, such as prostitution or adjudication as juvenile delinquents for prostitution, to petition the court to vacate their convictions if they can prove by a preponderance of evidence that their actions were the result of trafficking-related coercion. Sandlin, who has a background in law enforcement, told committee members that he retrospectively realizes that many individuals who were prosecuted for prostitution charges during his career were actually trafficking victims.

Schools overdose bill advances

Indiana schools could store and administer life-saving drugs to treat heroin overdoses and asthma attacks under a measure that a state Senate committee unanimously approved Wednesday (Costello, Associated Press). The bill would allow schools or school corporations to fill prescriptions to then keep a supply of naloxone and albuterol, an asthma treatment, in their buildings for use in emergency situations. Existing law allows them to stock epinephrine to treat severe allergic reactions. Democratic Sen. Mark Stoops, the measure's author, said expanding the permitted emergency medications could help prevent "tragic situations" when children have reactions, overdoses or respiratory attacks while at school. Schools wouldn't have to participate. Under the Bloomington lawmaker's bill, a nurse or trained school employee could administer the drugs when a person is demonstrating signs or symptoms of a life-threatening emergency. A report to the Indiana Department of Education would be required after administration.

Setback for Vanderburgh tax bill

Indiana lawmakers likely won't vote on, or even discuss, a bill that would have let Vanderburgh County officials raise the local income tax to expand the county jail (Evans, Evansville Courier & Press). The bill's future isn't clear, but county officials have chalked the legislation as a loss. Vanderburgh County Council President John Montrastelle, R-District 4, said during Wednesday's meeting the bill was "pulled" and won't receive a hearing. ❖

Notre Dame ponders a Trump invitation

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – “The University of Notre Dame confers the degree of doctor of laws, honoris causa, on the 45th president of the United States ... Donald J. Trump.”

Q. Will those words be spoken by the Rev. John Jenkins, Notre Dame president, on May 21 at the university’s 172nd commencement?



A. Only if two things happen: Jenkins invites Trump as commencement speaker and Trump accepts the invitation.

Q. Are an invitation and acceptance likely?

A. We don’t know what could be in the works – negotiations with the White House? – but neither invitation nor acceptance was regarded as either likely or impossible as strong

opinions were heard on campus, including differing views in letters to the Observer, the student newspaper.

Q. Some students want Trump invited?

A. Sure. Some, even if not liking all of the divisive things Trump has said and done, think the university should follow a tradition of inviting presidents to speak at commencement, especially newly elected presidents.

Q. An example?

A. In a letter to the Observer, junior Maximilian Towe wrote, “I’m trying to think who’s under more pressure at ND right now: Brian Kelly or Father Jenkins? One is coming off a 4-8 football season despite markedly high preseason expectations, while the other is confronted with the quandary of either abiding by the Notre Dame tradition of inviting the United States president for commencement, or shirking this tradition to keep perhaps the most polarizing figure in America off our campus.” Towe said it was right to invite President Obama as 2009 speaker, despite some protests then, and that “we owe the same courtesy to his controversial successor.”

Q. There’s disagreement with that?

A. Sure is. Thousands of students and faculty members have signed petitions urging Jenkins not to invite Trump. Junior Liam Maher presented that view in the Observer, responding to Towe: “The author errs in normalizing Trump’s behavior so as to compare it to the controversy surrounding President Barack Obama. The latter was criticized primarily due to his political policies (read: his stance on abortion), whereas the former stirs controversy through his blatant disregard for people and their human dignity.” Maher said that inviting Trump would go beyond politics and condone “language of hate, fear, selfishness and anger.”

Q. What has Father Jenkins said?

A. He is weighing the invitation tradition against what Trump at commencement would mean for graduates and their parents. He said there was “a bit of a political circus” with Obama in 2009 and: “My concern a little bit is that, should the new president come, it may be even more of a circus.”

Q. Would Trump bring more protest at commencement than there was in ‘09?

A. More by far. Most of the Obama protest took place before commencement, such as with a plane flying around and around campus for days with an anti-abortion sign. A brief attempt in the audience to interrupt Obama was put down by graduates drowning out the few protesters with a loud, proud claim: “We are ND!” Most students were content that Obama, no matter his political views, was being recognized as the first African-American president and was there really to honor the late Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, a giant in civil rights.

Q. Wouldn’t students be content with honoring Trump for achieving the presidency?

A. Some would. Some wouldn’t. Strong sentiment against Trump on deportation was shown by both the student senate and faculty senate urging that the university be declared a “sanctuary campus” to protect undocumented students against any Trump efforts to remove them. Some students walked out of class in a demonstration calling on Jenkins to declare sanctuary status. They wouldn’t be silent during a Trump appearance.

Q. Would Trump come, if invited?

A. He might not. He doesn’t think kindly of those who criticize him. There would be a lot of criticism at Notre Dame. But if he came, he would answer back. ❖

Colwell has covered Indiana politics over five decades for the South Bend Tribune.

Radical thoughts on commuting

By MORTON MARCUS

INDIANAPOLIS – Snow Flake wears a “Hippie for Goldwater” pin and a “Make Indiana Great Again” cap. After she reads a draft of the column intended for this week, she says, “Rewrite it.”



I’m aghast. No one has ever told me to rewrite an entire column. Seething, I ask, “Why?”

“It doesn’t promote the policy needed in this country,” she says. “It fails to advocate civic and environmental responsibility, an end to urban

sprawl, and a restoration of family life by reducing cross-county commuting."

"Snow," I answer, "this is just a column pointing out the magnitudes of money that cross Hoosier county lines by commuting, something like \$63 billion in 2015."

"We'd be better off," she responds, "if that money stayed where it was made. People ought to live where they work and work where they live. All this commuting causes time lost in needless travel, excess use of energy, pollution, congestion, and alienation from community."

"**Hardly useless," I insist.** "Commuting allows workers greater choice in jobs and families greater choice in residences."

"But it rips people out of their communities," Snow says. "What interest do you have in the problems of the county in which you work, if you live elsewhere? And commuters probably have less time or concern with their home county because it is not the source of their livelihoods."

"Reality..." I start to say. But she interrupts, "Don't give me your take on reality. Each county, each state, each nation needs to do what's best for itself. Over a billion dollars a year are stolen via commuting from each of six Indiana counties, Marion, Elkhart, Vanderburgh, Allen, Bartholomew and Tippecanoe. They're the biggest of the 19 exporters of earnings in the state.

"The other 73 counties are leaches," she continues, "sucking the life out of the exporting counties that

give up their land, endure the traffic, and risk decades of pollution by providing jobs to people who don't live there."

"That's a horrifying picture of our society," I say.

"We can change it," Snow says. "Charge fees on vehicles with out-of-county license plates for parking in our county. Place a tax on the income of non-residents. Tax employers who hire out-of-county workers or give them tax breaks for hiring in-county workers."

"Some of those ideas have been tried," I say. "But, economies work best when goods, services, capital and people can cross boundaries freely."

"That's old-style thinking," Snow smirks. "We all know that taking care of ourselves first is the best way to increase the welfare of everyone.

"**That would mean no** inter-state commuting?" I say. "Right on!" she says. "If you work in Chicago or Louisville or Cincinnati, go live there or find a job in your home county."

"That policy would deprive Hoosiers of about \$5.8 billion dollars in earnings," I note. "There's more to life than money," Snow chants. "Change your column from dull numbers to these patriotic ideas and you'll have people cheering."

I'm listening for the cheers or jeers. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist, writer, and speaker who may be reached at mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com.

Justice Rucker's journey ending

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – Indiana Supreme Court Justice Robert Rucker plans to retire sometime this spring. Rucker, a Gary native, and I met some 37 years ago when he



was on the campaign trail. He was bright, good looking and it seemed like his future was going to be bright.

But, it didn't start out too well. Rucker decided to run for judge, Lake Superior Court, County Division, in 1980. I guess they called them small claims court judges back then. His opponent in the Democratic primary was East Chicago native Steven Bielak, who,

like Rucker, was an upcoming judicial and political star. It was quite a primary, and in true Lake County tradition, the mud flew freely.

Bielak's handlers insisted on newspaper ads depicting the two candidates, and many of the ads contained photographs of the two candidates. And, because

Bielak was white and Rucker was black, it became a very racist campaign. And the unbecoming photo of Rucker seemed to have come from a police lineup.

At the time, black candidates didn't win primary elections for countywide offices in Lake County. And, Rucker didn't become the exception. Bielak trounced the man who seemed to have a leg up in terms of qualifications.

Rucker's loss – and the fact that blacks didn't hold countywide offices at the time – angered Gary Mayor Richard G. Hatcher, who with Carl Stokes in Cleveland, became the first black mayors of major U.S. cities in 1967. Hatcher wanted to see blacks win countywide offices and moved to make that happen at a county Democratic convention. After all, Hatcher argued that blacks delivered 25 percent of the Democratic vote and deserved some gains in return.

The Gary mayor introduced a resolution calling on the party to back a black candidate for a countywide office. When the party refused to do so, Hatcher and his delegation walked out of the convention.

Things, of course, have changed. There are three blacks holding countywide office, Clerk Mike Brown, Assessor Jerome Prince and Prosecutor Bernard Carter.

Rucker, of course, got named to the Supreme Court, not elected. I remember talking to Rucker a few years later when he visited Lake County. I joked that he

couldn't even win a small claims court election and now he was on the Supreme Court. In true Rucker style, he laughed.

I also found it interesting that as a Supreme Court justice, he took a seat on the Lake County Judicial Nominating Commission which screened judge applicants and sent three names to the governor from which one was picked to fill a judicial vacancy.

Obama's farewell

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – The responsibility for making this a better country lies with each of us. As a country, we make a habit of looking forward, not backward. But I'm going to ask you to turn your attention back a few weeks, to Barack Obama's Jan. 10 farewell address to the American people.



I've been reading presidential farewell speeches for many years. Most of them give good advice. This speech, however, was exceptional. It can be read with benefit by Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, because it says a lot of things that we need to hear about our system and our country. I hope that for some time to come, this speech will be a topic of conversation in classrooms, at church socials, and around the table at local service clubs.

Why? To begin with, the speech is filled with confidence in ordinary people and respect for what workaday Americans can accomplish. This is a founding value of our country – both a promise and a call to civic arms. Our rights, the former president notes, "have never been self-executing." Instead, our system is built around the belief "that We, the People, through the instrument of our democracy, can form a more perfect union."

The responsibility for making this a better country, in other words, lies with each of us. "Show up, dive in, stay at it," he says. "And more often than not, your faith in America and in Americans will be confirmed."

At the same time, throughout the speech, Mr. Obama makes it clear that it's challenging to make representative democracy work. As a nation, he argues, we have enormous potential, but we cannot take our success for granted. If we don't "create opportunity for all people," he warns, "the disaffection and division that has stalled our progress will only sharpen in years to come."

Indeed, our democracy is being severely tested right now, in part by a disintegrating sense of common ground among Americans of different racial, ethnic, and class background, and in part by the growing ease with

As for Bielak, he got in legal trouble and left the bench. And, Bielak's replacement? Sheila Moss, a black woman from Gary, got the job and remains on the bench. ❖

Rich James has been writing about state and local government and politics for more than 30 years. He is a columnist for the Times of Northwest Indiana.

which people can retreat into "bubbles," both geographic and ideological, in which we see only people we identify with and hear only information that already fits our pre-conceived notions.

This makes the underpinnings of a successful representative democracy – the search for common ground, the willingness to negotiate, the freedom to compromise – difficult if not impossible to pursue.

Yet what may be most striking about the farewell address is that it is filled with hope, and with a clear optimism that we can overcome division and temporary steps backward. Not that this will be easy, Mr. Obama notes. Restoring a sense of common purpose will require a change both in hearts and in beliefs. "We all have to start with the premise that each of our fellow citizens loves this country just as much as we do; that they value hard work and family just like we do; that their children are just as curious and hopeful and worthy of love as our own," he says.

Furthermore, he recognizes that while politics is a battle of ideas, "without some common baseline of facts, without a willingness to admit new information and concede that your opponent might be making a fair point, and that science and reason matter, then we're going to keep talking past each other." These are challenges, but they're hardly insurmountable, especially if we learn to put ourselves in others' shoes.

As you read this speech, it's hard to avoid a sense of the basic strength of our country. There's a celebration of the peaceful transfer of power, a straightforward discussion of race and ways to surmount the burdens that racial discord have imposed on our society, a magnanimity toward ideological adversaries, an underlying sense of inclusiveness and decency. These are wise words from a mature politician who clearly has confidence in the nation's ability to forge ahead and meet its challenges.

I understand that a lot of people in this country don't agree with former President Obama on many things. But set aside the person who wrote it for a moment; this speech is instructive for all of us on what this country is all about and how we can make it better. ❖

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; He was a member of the U.S. House of Representa-

Michael Morrell, Washington Post: As you walk through the main lobby of the CIA, your gaze is drawn to the right — toward the Memorial Wall, with its 117 stars, one for each CIA officer who has died in the line of duty; toward the Book of Honor listing the names of those officers, where cover considerations allow; and toward the fresh flowers that are almost always there, placed by friends and colleagues inspired by their sacrifice. It was this wall that drew so much negative commentary about President Trump's visit to the CIA this month — the president's brief, almost offhand reference to a memorial that is the soul of the agency, and his clear elevation of his ego above the sacrifices of those memorialized on the wall. Such commentaries were on the mark, and they captured my own feelings as well. But there is another wall in the lobby that carries almost as much significance as the Memorial Wall — the wall that is to the left as you enter, the wall that your eye often misses. On that wall is a verse from the Gospel of John that reads, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The CIA website notes that this verse is the agency's "motto," but it is much more. It is the ethos of the agency — the strongly held belief that is the job of the CIA, as it relates to national security, to discover the truth and share it with the president, no matter what the implications might be for policy, politics or the president himself. This ethos is discussed on an employee's first day on the job, when a young officer raises his or her right hand and takes the oath of office — in the very lobby where Trump spoke. The ethos is stressed in training classes, directors reference it in speeches, and it is reinforced in the lore shared when officers gather to have a drink after a long week. The ethos is a key tenet of both the operational and analytic sides of the organization. It is a deeply embedded part of the culture. Any perception of someone trying to alter the truth, as the officers see it, creates immediate antibodies — complaints to management, complaints to the agency ombudsman (itself a creation of the ethos), complaints to Congress and, unfortunately, occasional leaks to the media. It was, therefore, a deep irony that Trump chose the CIA lobby, with its quote from John's Gospel, as the location of his first official act as president. It is an irony because, as has become clear, the president seems to shun the truth and he alters it with alarming frequency. In speaking to the American people, he misrepresents the facts almost daily. ❖



David Brooks, New York Times: This is a column directed at high school and college students. I'm going to try to convey to you how astoundingly different the Republican Party felt when I was your age. The big guy then was Ronald Reagan. Temperamentally, though not politically, Reagan was heir to the two Roosevelts. He inherited a love of audacity from T.R. and optimism and charm from F.D.R. He had a sunny faith in America's destiny and in America's

ability to bend global history toward freedom. He had a sunny faith in the free market to deliver prosperity to all. The mood of the party is so different today. Donald Trump expressed the party's new mood to David Muir of ABC, when asked about his decision to suspend immigration from some Muslim countries: "The world is a mess. The world is as angry as it gets. What, you think this is going to cause a little more anger? The world is an angry place." Consider the tenor of Trump's first week in office. It's all about threat perception. He has made moves to build a wall against the Mexican threat, to build barriers against the Muslim threat, to end a trade deal with Asia to fight the foreign economic threat, to build black site torture chambers against the terrorist threat. Trump is on his political honeymoon, which should be a moment of joy and promise. But he seems to suffer from an angry form of anhedonia, the inability to experience happiness. Instead of savoring the moment, he's spent the week in a series of nasty squabbles about his ratings and crowd sizes. If Reagan's dominant emotional note was optimism, Trump's is fear. If Reagan's optimism was expansive, Trump's fear propels him to close in: Pull in from Asian entanglements through rejection of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Pull in from European entanglements by disparaging NATO. It's not a cowering, timid fear; it's more a dark, resentful porcupine fear. We have a word for people who are dominated by fear. We call them cowards. Students, the party didn't used to be this way. A mean wind is blowing. ❖

Matt Tully, IndyStar: Many Hoosiers spoke out this weekend against the Trump administration's immigration order. Their voices were as welcome as they were necessary. They cannot go away. Let's take a moment to thank those who drove to the Indianapolis airport this weekend to protest the latest display of hatred coming from Donald J. Trump, a man so unfit for the U.S. presidency that it's still hard to believe he holds that position. The protesters held hand-made signs saying "Indy welcomes all," and "We are all immigrants." They stared into TV cameras and spoke in an all-American way in support of refugees and others targeted by the new administration. In doing so, they spoke not only to but for many of us who understand that safety and security are critical issues but that Trump is exploiting fears to push through the type of government-sponsored discrimination that will serve as a sad mark on our nation's history. To all those who protested, thank you. The only good news is that Donald Trump's discrimination has been met by so many voices of dissent. so many wise voices emerged this weekend. Voices like that of Mitch Daniels, the Purdue University president. Daniels issued a statement condemning Trump's executive order on immigration as "a bad idea, poorly implemented." That said it all: The Trump White House — these are my words, not Daniels' — is not only misguided but apparently incompetent. ❖

Holcomb to head to East Chicago

EAST CHICAGO — Residents of the lead- and arsenic-contaminated USS Lead Superfund site hope to get some face-to-face time with GOP Gov. Eric Holcomb when he plans to visit East Chicago later this month (Cross, NWI Times). "We want him to meet with us, take a tour of the entire Superfund site and really find out what's going on and hear it first-hand from the residents," said Maritza Lopez, a resident in East Calumet and member of the Community Advisory Group, a resident-led organization advocating on behalf of residents during the Environmental Protection Agency's cleanup of the Superfund site. Holcomb spokeswoman Stephanie Wilson confirmed Wednesday that Holcomb is planning a trip to meet with local officials regarding the city's lead contamination problems. She did not have additional details and could not say if Holcomb will also be meeting with residents. "That trip will help inform next steps," Wilson said in an email.

Tony Bennett joins Clark County Council

JEFFERSONVILLE — Former State Superintendent of Public Instruction and Clark County native Tony Bennett is now a member of the Clark County Council (Beilman, News & Tribune). Bennett was one of two Republicans caucused onto the board Wednesday evening in an unexpected move. "Our family's roots are in Clark County," Bennett said. "When my family and I moved back to the area, it was an opportunity I saw."

Pence could break DeVos tie

WASHINGTON — Vice President Pence may soon get to cast his

first tie-breaking vote in the Senate (Groppe, IndyStar). Two Republicans - Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska - announced Wednesday they will vote against the confirmation of Betsy DeVos as education secretary. If the 50 other Senate Republicans vote for DeVos, and the 46 Democrats and two independents who caucus with them oppose her, the Senate would split 50-50.

Deputy Indy mayor posts Facebook slur

TERRE HAUTE — The deputy mayor of Indianapolis' neighborhood engagement has been accused of writing a racially offensive slur over Facebook (WISH-TV). In the photo, you can see David A. Hampton's name next to some racially offensive comments in what appears to be a reply to a photo of President Trump holding a meeting to honor Black History Month. Hampton also serves as the senior pastor of Light the World Christian Church. Councillor Michael McQuillen has called on Mayor Hogsett to take action.

Flynn threatens Iran after missile

WASHINGTON — National Security Adviser Michael Flynn said Wednesday that President Donald Trump's administration is "officially putting Iran on notice," and senior administration officials later refused to rule out military action against the Islamic Republic (Politico). Senior administration officials Wednesday afternoon said Iran's "highly provocative" behavior, including a recent missile test, "is a destabilizing factor in the region" and promised a response. The administration is considering "a large number of options" to address Iran, but refused to say whether military action is among them. Later Wednesday, Trump echoed Flynn's more aggressive stance toward Iran in a tweet.

"Iran is rapidly taking over more and more of Iraq even after the U.S. has squandered three trillion dollars there. Obvious long ago!" he said on Twitter..

Scales bolts Republican Party

INDIANAPOLIS — City-County Councilwoman Christine Scales announced Wednesday she is dumping the GOP and becoming a Democrat (Ryckaert, IndyStar). "I ran for my council office as a Republican and have voted with the party for more than 40 years," Scales said on Facebook. "This is a difficult decision for me, but one I feel I must make in order to serve the best interest of my constituents." Scales praised Mayor Joe Hogsett and council President Maggie A. Lewis for their leadership and inclusiveness. "I anticipate accomplishing more of behalf of my constituents, as well as being able to better work toward the greater good of the City of Indianapolis," Scales said

Trump badgers Australian PM

WASHINGTON — It should have been one of the most congenial calls for the new commander in chief — a conversation with the leader of Australia, one of America's staunchest allies, at the end of a triumphant week (Washington Post). Instead, President Trump blasted Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull over a refugee agreement and boasted about the magnitude of his electoral college win, according to senior U.S. officials briefed on the Saturday exchange. Then, 25 minutes into what was expected to be an hour-long call, Trump abruptly ended it. At one point, Trump informed Turnbull that he had spoken with four other world leaders that day — including Russian President Vladimir Putin — and that "this was the worst call by far."

